DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 289 582 PS 016 978

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TITLE Family Time or Prime Time? Jobs, Leisure and Relationships in the 1980's.
INSTITUTION Vanier Inst. of the Family, Ottawa (Ontario).
PUB DATE 11 May 86
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Conference of the British Columbia Recreation Association and the National Recreation and Parks Association (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, May 11, 1986).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Consumer Economics; *Employed Parents; *Family (Sociological Unit); Family Financial Resources; *Family Life; Family Mobility; *Family Problems; Foreign Countries; Home Management; Labor Force; *Leisure Time
IDENTIFIERS Canada

ABSTRACT

It is important to examine assumptions concerning leisure time and families within the larger contexts of demographic, technological, social, political, economic, and cultural change. Many people assume that individuals have more leisure time now than did their predecessors. While there has been a reduction in the average length of the work week, there has also been an increase in the total number of hours per week that families contribute to the labor force because of the increasing numbers of working women. Leisure time is further decreased by the need to complete household chores in the time available before and after work. Home lives have taken on the routines and time-management techniques of the office and factory. Time for family members to be together is essential to the well-being of the family. Too often programs and policies deny that individuals are in relationships with others and that they have responsibilities concerning the members of their families. It is time to consider whether conceptions of leisure and recreation have, in the past, unintentionally drawn people away from each other in segregated activities, and whether we can develop programs which will bring people together and build relationships between young and old, men and women, and able and disabled. (PCB)

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# FAMILY TIME OR PRIME TIME?

## JOBS, LEISURE AND RELATIONSHIPS IN THE 1980's.

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A plenary address to the "Leisure in Motion-1986" conference of the British Columbia Recreation Association and the National Recreation and Parks Association, Vancouver, May 11, 1986.

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I will begin by borrowing a story from Dr. Lois Wilson, the past Moderator of the United Church in Canada. The story concerns a 65 year old man who was being examined, for the first time, by a doctor. As is the custom, the doctor started by taking some notes about the man's medical and family history.

> "Tell me," asks the Doctor, "How old was your father when he died?"
>
> "Did I say my father had died?" responds the patient.
>
> "No, you didn't," says the doctor. "I'm terribly sorry. I suppose I just took it for granted. How old is your father, then?"
>
> "Well," said the patient, "He's 85 and in very good health."
>
> "Excellent," replies the doctor. "Perhaps, you can tell me how old your grandfather was when he died."
>
> "Did I say my grandfather had died?"
>
> "No, I guess you didn't," replies the doctor. Again, I just took it for granted. Well then, how old is your grandfather?"
>
> "He's 105 and, as a matter of fact, he's just been married for the second time."
>
> "I'm amazed," said the doctor. "But, you must tell me: Why would a man of his age want to get married again?"
>
> "Did I say he <u>wanted</u> to get married?"

Like the doctor, most of us rely upon taken-for-granted assumptions. It is my task today to help us suspend some of the judgments they imply and to put into question some of the assumptions we have come to take-for-granted about the direction our modern societies and economies are moving in as well as about the place of leisure and the position of families within the larger contexts of demographic, technological, social, political, economic

and, indeed, cultural change.

Most of us, it seems to me, take for granted that we have more leisure time at our disposal now than did our predecessors. Furthermore, most of us believe that we can reasonably anticipate an even greater need to figure out ways to use our leisure time and to use it in more creative ways. Personally, I'm skeptical.

You may remember, as I do, promises that, by now, we would be living in a 'leisured' society. But, few of us, I suggest, feel more leisured or that we have more free time in a world where everyone leaves home at 7:30 a.m. and returns at 5:30 or 6:00p.m. Some of you may recognize the now typical family's routine.

Up early in the morning in time to get kids dressed, lunches made and kids delivered to daycare or school before mother and father must arrive at their places of employment. Then proceeds a regular day of busyness, meetings, phone calls, assembly lines and/or memos before rushing to pick up the kids by a pre-determined time so that their caregivers do not charge us with breach of contract. Then, home to prepare a meal while T.V. babysits the kids. Once a week, we're off to the community college to take a course on Introduction to Microprocessing for the sake of career advancement and twice a week off to exercise classes in order to keep our bodies fit enough to pursue this pace. Baths and homework are supervised prior to our scheduled amount of time for interpersonal relating before we watch the National News which, thank God, now comes on at 10:00 p.m. instead of 11:00 p.m. because the Canadian Broadcasting

Corporation shrewdly realized we can hardly keep our eyes open past 10:30. Weekends have assumed their own schedule, often even tighter than the weekdays as we set off to Canadian Tire to purchase the insulating materials that will occupy us on Sunday before, if we can manage it, friends arrive for dinner.

It is, perhaps, no wonder that more and more people today choose, in the context of this 'leisured' society to remain childless, to remain single and to minimize the number and the duration of their time-consuming commitments to others.

More and more, our home lives, our times together have taken on the routines, orderliness and time-management techniques of the office and the factory. Family experts tell us, in all seriousness, that we must make appointments with our children, that we must arrange a meeting of family members at least once a week and that we must write each other memos so that we all know where everyone else is. And, if your fridge and bulletin board look anything like mine, you'll know that these experts have simply confirmed the habits we have come to take-for-granted.

My choice, in the above example, of a dual wage-earning family with relatively young children is intentional. In the midst of such profound changes as the communications and computer revolutions or the fundamental challenge to industrialized economies posed by the prospects of continuing high levels of unemployment, it is the changing status of women in society and the changing nature of the responsibilities that they have

assumed in the work force, over the past twenty years, that promise to change the face and fabric of our society more than any other dynamic of change and which illustrates best the essential direction of change we are pursuing.

Over the past thirty years, the proportion of young women in the paid labour force in Canada has doubled such that by 1983 65.1% of women between the ages of 25 and 34 were employed. Almost half of women with children under the age of 6 hold jobs. The so-called traditional family form, the two-parent and one income family - the Father Knows Best model of the father who brings home the bacon and the woman who stays there to cook it - is now in the minority. Single-parent families, childless couples and couples in which both parents are employed outnumber that 'traditional' form. When we add to those varieties the families in which the children of former marriages live with a step-parent, step-siblings and half-brothers and half-sisters, you have a picture of the diversity of family types that makes it very difficult and misleading to speak of <u>the</u> family or to design policies and programs for <u>the</u> family; today, it is only possible to speak of, and to respect and to support families.

Before anyone is tempted to start lamenting the decline of the family and the collapse of our civilization because of this proliferation of different family forms, it is wise to remember that the tradition from which these family forms are said to depart was a very short tradition indeed. It is taken-for-granted that the traditional family was composed of two parents, only one of whom was active in the labour force, and their children. That

particular idea of the family is, in fact, a recent historical invention. It is an image that invokes what is, in essence, a model of Victorian upper middle-class family life as some kind of historical universal or constant. Its applicability was limited to industrially-based societies and, even so, as a model it served more as an aspiration than as a reality for the vast majority of the populations of such societies. Not until after the Second World War did such a life appear attainable for the working classes for whom the participation of women in the labour force, either in agricultural or industrial settings, had always been a requirement.

The changing role of women in society, as evidenced by their participation in the labour force, is not a temporary or transitory phenomenon. The rate of women's entrance into the labour force will possibly slow down, but, at least for the foreseeable future women will, like men, be responsible as individuals for their financial well-being and security and, very often, for the well-being and security of their children as well. Fears are sometimes expressed that women will, as in the past, be pushed out of the labour force in order to reduce levels of male unemployment; some economists even suggest that such a trend would be a good thing. I believe that women have gained equality with men at least to the extent that their right to participation in the labour force and, indeed, their obligation to participate in the labour force has been ensured. Women now have pretty much the same choice available to them as men have always had; namely, they can choose to be employed

(albeit at 60 cents on the dollar) either full-time or part-time or they can choose to be poor (for some in absolute terms and for others in terms relative to the prevailing definition of the good life). Women are in the labour force to stay for a number of reasons.

First, there has been, over the past twenty years, an erosion of what was once called the "family wage." This idea, once strongly defended by the labour movement, was based on the assumption that the average industrial wage paid to employees (more specifically to male employees) should be sufficient to support financially a number of dependent children and a financially dependent spouse whose primary social responsibility was the care and upbringing of children. It was upon this assumption that men, for a restricted number of years, could assert that "No wife of mine will ever have to get a job." And, it was upon this foundation of the "family wage" that the model of the single breadwinner nuclear family and all of the aspirations and sex roles associated with it evolved. Yet, today, the average wage paid to an employee is no longer sufficient to meet the financial needs of an equal number of dependents as was the case during the 1950's and early 1960's. Accordingly, statistics reveal that the average purchasing power of Canadian families have been maintained only by virtue of the dramatic rise in the number of dual wage-earning and multiple-earner families.

Only in part does this trend toward dual wage-earning families as the statistically normal pattern of economic functioning reflect

an increase in the personal aspirations of individuals for a 'richer' lifestyle. For many families, two incomes have become necessary simply 'to make ends meet.' As an aside, one might acknowledge the extent to which the relative decline in the purchasing power of the average industrial wage contributes to the tragically severe financial circumstances of single parents and their children who must, by definition, rely upon the earnings of only one individual.

Furthermore, we must recognize that in the context of modern economies that are addicted to growth in the rates of production and consumption there is a systemic need for individuals to increase their appetites as consumers. The purchasing power of families is regarded, by economists, as a major 'engine'of economic growth and development; accordingly, economists and politicians remind us, on a monthly basis, of the number of housing starts and the levels of consumer confidence because of the importance of such factors for the 'health' of the lumber industry, the automobile manufacturers and the commercial sectors of the economy. Similarly illustrative is the fact that in Canada more than $5,000 per family is spent annually on advertising.

Having acknowledged some of the economic factors that lead me to believe that the labour force participation of women represents what economists refer to as a 'serious' commitment to employment, I would note also significant changes in the expectations and aspirations of men and women, especially of young men and women. Attitude surveys and opinion polls reveal that our youth maintain strong and, perhaps

surprisingly, very traditional values with regard to marriage and children; the vast majority of young people report that they expect to marry - most believe they will marry only once - and that they will bear a number of children. However, young women also indicate that they do not expect that their family commitments and childcare responsibilities will necessarily occasion a significant interruption in their occupational careers. Furthermore, in what amounts to a 180 degree reversal of the so-called traditional male attitudes, young men indicate they are not prepared to assume responsibility for a financially dependent spouse over any prolonged periods of time. Similarly, there have been dramatic shifts in the attitudes of mature men and women with regard to the desireability of female employment.

Projected shifts in the population structure of modern industrialized societies have led some demographers to conclude that we will face, in the not-to-distant future, labour shortages at least in certain sectors of the economy. The simple fact is that the population of Canada, like the populations of 'advanced' societies, is aging and it is aging not because people are living longer but because adults are now choosing to have very few children. Shortly after the turn of the century, more people will die in Canada every day than will be born and the actual number of Canadians will start to decline unless immigration rates rise dramatically. In consequence, we face the prospect that a relatively smaller proportion of the population which is active in the labour force will become increasingly responsible for the financial

support of a proportionately larger number of dependent senior citizens. Ironically, even if the young who often claim that they cannot afford the costs of raising children were inclined to reverse these population trends by bearing and rearing more children, it grows increasingly more difficult for them to do so when they have assumed the burdens of the old and of the taxation that supports the old. When young adults cannot resist the 'luxury' of children, they choose, according to Statistics Canada to have one and a half. Families are consistently growing smaller such that it no longer seems as important as it once was to ask an adult how many children she or he has. In fact, in the present circumstances, it is much more to the point to inquire of a child as to how many parents he or she has recognizing that teachers, doctors and people in your profession of recreation really do need to know whether or not that child has one or two residences, one, two or four parents and step-parents and so on.

Together, these economic, social and demographic changes that have made each adult individually responsible for his or her own financial well-being reinforce the tendency for women to commit a larger proportion of their adult lives to employment than they did in the recent past. And, added to these forces, there is one more reason - seldom acknowledged but, in fact, quite fundamental - that commits both men and women to the labour force. The modern State has, it seems, an ever-expanding appetite for tax dollars. Our system of taxation is based primarily upon and has been growing increasingly dependent upon the taxation of personal incomes

in contrast to other systems of taxation based upon wealth, consumption or production. The state's need for an increasingly broad tax base translates into a need for more people with incomes, a need for more employees. Not surprisingly, it is this particular fact that seems to prove far more convincing than all the sociological and ethical arguments one can muster when one speaks with those politicians and policy-makers who naively assume that the world would be a better place with less male unemployment, less need for costly child care subsidies and less juvenile delinquency, divorce and what have you if only women would return to the kitchen. After all, it quickly becomes apparent to them that whatever problems with deficits they might have now would pale in comparison to the shortfalls they would experience if they could not rely on the taxes collected from employed women.

Having now talked at some length about the economy and the constitution of the labour force, I come back full circle to the topic of leisure. Without doubt, we have seen a reduction in the average length of the work week such that most employees no longer work 48 or 44 or 40 hours per week. As individuals, we may have experienced a modest increase in the amount of time we spend away from our jobs. But, such a figure is a measure of an <u>individual's</u> contribution of time to the labour force. I suggest it is time to pay attention to the fact that these modest gains in the so-called 'free time' of individuals need to be understood in the context of a substantial increase in the amount of time that families, on average, devote to their jobs.

As we have seen, there are a number of reasons why families now

devote more time to the labour force even if, as individuals, we seem to spend a little less time at our jobs. Certainly, we need to earn the money necessary in order to purchase the labour-saving devices that we believe give us more leisure time such as washing machines and dryers. However, it is interesting to note that women today, in fact, wash eight times as much laundry as did their grandmothers. It's obvious, then, that we do need these labour-saving devices as well as the incomes required to purchase them and all the clothes we put into them. Because we're all away from home during the day earning these incomes, we grow to need the microwave oven to defrost the chicken we forgot to take out of the freezer before we left for work. Of course, if we forgot to buy the chicken on one of our not so fuel-efficient trips to the shopping center, we are forced to go to the fast food outlet for dinner.

All this 'economic' activity - much of which is uneconomical to say the least - is monitored by rises in the Gross National Product which most of us, and especially economists, naively equate with increases in our standards of living and the quality of our lives. Having failed to remember that the word, economy, originally meant the stewardship of our homes, economists have focussed almost exclusively on the cash transactions of the marketplace. Insodoing, they have failed to recognize that not one of us in this room nor even they themselves can rely solely on participation in the labour market to secure the necessities of life. An Australian political economist effectively reminds us of this fact when he writes:

> How easily we could turn the tables on the economists if we all decided tomorrow morning, the work of the domestic sector should be paid for. Instead of cooking dinner for her own lot each housewife would feed her neighbours at regular restaurant rates; then they'd cook for her family and get their money back. We'd do each other's housework and gardening at award rates. Big money would change hands when we fixed each other's tap washers and electric plugs at the plumber's and electrician's rates. Without a scrap of extra work the gross national product would go up by a third overnight. We would increase that to half if the children rented each other's backyards and paid each other as play supervisors, and we could double it if we all went to bed next door at regular massage parlour rates.
> (Hugh Stretton, in "Seeing the Economy Whole" - James Robertson, Vanier Institute Max Bell Lecture, Ottawa, 1979)

Stretton's observations remind us that even if it is true that individuals have more hours each day away from their jobs it would be a mistake to think that the time remaining to them is discretionary. For it is the case that it is into those hours that one must fit the tasks and responsibilities that have always occupied the time, the energy and the commitment of responsible family and community members. Individuals may have more time away from their jobs but, considered as members of a group family members have less time away from employment and, perhaps most importantly, less time to be together.

Time together is, to my way of thinking, essential to families. The reason why is suggested by Francis Moore Lappé when she writes:

> There is a lot of talk about 'family' these days, a lot of hand-wringing over its demise. But even those most distressed about threats to the family have few ideas about how to strengthen it. Some cling to the form, wishing that somehow we could promote marriage or encourage parents to better enforce rules at home. But

> families aren't marriages or homes or rules. Families are people who develop intimacy because they live together, because they share experiences that come over the years to make up their uniqueness - the mundane, even silly traditions that emerge in a group of people who know each other in every mood and circumstance. It is this intimacy that provides the ground for our lives.
> (Francis Moore Lappé, "What do you do after you turn off the T.V.?, Utne Reader, Dec.84/Jan.85, p. 68)

It is too often assumed that family is an unchanging, static and rigid societal institution. In fact, it's exactly the opposite. Family is the embodiment of change. Families mature and grow old as their members develop, mature, grow old and die, as the places of one generation are assumed by the members of another. If you think about all the little mundane rituals and celebrations and traditions unique to any specific family, you'll see that they serve to acknowledge the processes of change, maturation and growth. These rituals and family traditions illustrate the curious fact that a family is never the same yet it is still the same family. Birthdays, anniversaries, tooth fairies, Bar Mitzvahs, piano recitals, graduations, driver's licences - all these are acknowledgments of change. Each family demarcates the passage of time by embroidering these rituals and making them their own. These family traditions, then, become the stuff of memories, the memories of our times together and of our membership in a family. The same box of Christmas decorations gets brought out year after year. A year has passed but the box occasions in us a recollection of Christmases gone by and serves to reconfirm that our lives are lives lived with others, that our experiences are shared and important to others. The photograph albums are pulled out by the kids on a rainy day. "Was that really what I looked like? It can't be.

I couldn't have been so small." And the parent responds, "Yes, that's you dear. Haven't you grown big? Still, your my little 'pumpkin', 'munchkin', 'kiddo'"or whatever other names of affection each family uses to affirm its special relationships.

Families of whatever shape and constitution share common needs and seek to fulfill common aspirations and societal expectations. It is, after all, still families that are primarily responsible for the work of feeding, cleaning, clothing and educating children in social and linguistic skills, in caring for infirm members, in providing financially and emotionally and supportively for the older members of our society. All of this work is time-consuming, exhausting and expensive.

Until quite recently, we had allowed ourselves to believe that the 'modern' family had evolved into a highly specialized unit of emotional and psychological commitment, a societal institution no longer devoted to its earlier historical functions of economic production, education, health care and welfare. But, today, in a persistent climate of restraint, in an age of diminishing expectations, the idea of family and the significance of family has been rediscovered: families are now heralded as potential agents of health promotion, providers of care for the young, the old and the sick, as the principal loci of attitudinal and behavioral change and as the first source of economic and financial security for their members. As Letty Cottin Pogrebin suggested a couple of years ago:

> ...it seems safe to say that what civil rights and Vietnam were to the Sixties, and women's rights and the environment were to the Seventies, family issues have become to the Eighties. (Family Politics: 1983)

To be sure, there is a good deal of naiveté that goes along with this rediscovery of the family. All too often, politicians, policy-makers and planners seek to rediscover the inherent strengths and capacities of families as a justification for the withdrawl of costly services that were once provided for free by family and community members but have now become the products and services of the formal marketplace and a drain upon the public purse. Many would like to believe that families could now take up again where they left off thirty years ago. Without intending to demean the intentions and generosity of communities as they attempt to respond to the 'crisis' of the Welfare State as are present in the proliferation of food banks and hostels, one really must question whether or not our society's increasing reliance on the reemergence of the philanthropic attitude is realistic or desireable. Surely, one must temper one's expectations about what families and communities can do in the context of a modern economy that insists on moving 50% of the population from one neighbourhood or town to another once every five years.

Is it realistic to increase our expectations on families at a time when they have changed so dramatically, when their daily routines are now so full that family members basically share their tiredness rather than their liveliness? It must be remembered that women are no longer at home to become the unpaid, invisible and under-valued caregivers for the young, the old and the sick. Is it the strength of the isolated and so often impoverished single-parent family that we will come to rely upon more? Is it the capacities of those 25% of families that live

below the poverty line that will sustain us? Is it the dual wage-earning family that will now add to its already frenetic schedule of industrial work routines, household management and childcare administration the responsibilities associated with the care of the old, the sick and the disabled? Is it today's childless couples that will be supported in their old age by family?

There is a naiveté inherent in some of the pleas for a rediscovery of family and a related aspiration that we can rebuild the vitality of our communities. Still, we must try to distinguish between the illegitimate expectations and the legitimate aspirations that tell us basically that we are beginning to see, once again, that there is a profound need for people to be together and to be supportive of one another in close face-to-face environments. We are beginning to appreciate that we can no longer live and that we are no longer happy relying so much on abstract, formal and impersonal systems of support. We have begun to remember that we are not just individuals but that we are individuals who need to be and want to be in relationships with one another. Having achieved all too well what Philip Slater called, some twenty years ago, 'the pursuit of loneliness', we have begun to see that we need to be with others.

Given that just about all the forces at play during the history of the evolution of industrial societies have reflected a commitment to a profoundly individualistic ideology, we need not be surprised that it is now easier for us to be apart from one another than it is to be together. In pre-industrial societies, people achieved whatever level of material

security because of their commitments to and relationships with their kin and kith. But, today, as I have pointed out, we have arrived at a situation wherein people achieve in spite of their family obligations and commitments. A woman with career aspirations jeopardizes her prospects every time the school nurse phones about a sick child or the babysitter falls ill. Management has started to moniter the declines in productivity on the part of female workers at around 3:30 in the afternoon when their minds begin to switch over to picking the kids up and 'what's out of the fridge for dinner.' A 'family man' demonstrates quite clearly when he is the one who leaves the office in response to the school nurse's call that he is a professional light weight and an employee who is definitely not on the yuppie fast-track to success.

I have spoken, at length, about families, about the nature of family relationships and about the circumstances that influence the state of family life today. I've done so, obviously, because it is the topic I know best. But, also, I do believe that by looking at the condition of our personal relationships in intimate contexts we see most clearly the challenges that lie before us as a society.

In contrast to my somewhat romantic description of families as ideally places where we spend time together and share our experiences, our relationships are, today, fragile and vulnerable. It is reasonable to anticipate that 40% of marriages entered into today will end in divorce. There are few romantic illusions left about families because what we hear most about is wives being beaten, children assaulted, sexually-abused and abducted and we see an escalation in our appeals to the

law to adjudicate in this seeming war of all against all.

In our present social and economic circumstances, we often face an unpalatable choice between what is best for me and what is best for us. In too many ways, ours is a world that makes commitment to others difficult and even more difficult to sustain. For that very reason, it spawns a frenetic search and a commercially-exploited search for intimacy and meaning. We have become an excessively individualized, atomistic, materialistic and self-centred society. Over the past two centuries, in all industrialized societies (be they capitalist or socialist) the major trend has been away from close and enduring ties with members of our extended families, friends and neighbours - the members of our community. We have come to feel increasingly isolated and impotent to act with others to influence the forces and decisions that determine the quality of our lives. As the quantities of goods and services we produce and consume has grown, as family businesses have grown into corporations and then into multinational corporations and as bureaucracies have grown ever larger, more complex and costly, our families and our circle of supportive others have grown smaller and more fragile.

Many people used to think of the family as a place that one escaped <u>into</u> from the pressures of the public world of commerce, industry and civic affairs. It seems to me that, today, many people no longer seek refuge within this so-called 'haven in a heartless world' but rather seek refuge <u>from</u> the family, from its relationships, its obligations and responsibilities. We withdraw into our workaholism, into excessively

individualized leisure pursuits and into television that ironically finds its way into the family room. Picture in your minds the patterns of interaction and human communication among family members as they are lined up watching television. "Shush!" "Pass the popcorn" "Stop hitting your brother (because) I can't hear the television." "Can't we watch something else?" As Urie Bronfenbrenner has observed:

> The primary danger of the television screen lies not so much in the behavior it produces as the behavior it prevents - the talks, the games, the family festivities and arguments through which much of the child's learning takes place and his character is formed. (Bronfenbrenner, The Ecology of Human Development, 1979, p. 242)

In fact, today we don't even have to sit in the same room to watch television; we don't even have to negotiate what program will be watched because the market of viewers has been fragmented such that each of us, with our own personal monitors, can now watch sports in the basement with Dad, old movies in the living room with Mom, music videos upstairs with Paul and specially-crafted quality programs for children if we choose to be alone in the family room.

It is not just within our families that we have managed to segregate ourselves according to age, sex and other criteria. When the economy tells us that we have to pack up to go where the jobs are, we do so secure in the knowledge that a phone call is the next best thing to being there. We treat ourselves as though we were interchangeable parts; in factories and offices, workers become, through unemployment and lay-offs, like inventory to be shelved until more prosperous times and, when the parts wear out, we relegate our senior citizens to their own environments where

neither we nor our children can any longer learn from them or provide to them any genuine kind of support. In our homes, the marriage partnership has become, for some, the equivalent of a non-binding contractually-limited relationship almost indistinguishable from any other business-like relationship based on self-interest.

You may know that women once shared the same legal status, in Canada, as children and idiots. They were denied not only legal rights but as well the opportunity to contribute to and shape the world of public affairs. As we have seen, some of these barriers have been broken down and women have entered the world traditionally dominated by men. Recently, people have begun to realize that, in the process, children have been left behind (along with idiots) to their own devices. We have told ourselves that it is the quality of our time together and not the quantity of time that is important but that maxim has started to ring hollow. Children and young people are, like the old in our society, confined largely to an artificial existence, without a real place in the affairs of men and women and without the opportunity to assume real responsibilities. As aliens within their own culture, they often express their alienation with Sex and Drugs and Rock and Roll as a band put it a few years ago.

The artificiality of television becomes a primary reference for our young. Through it, they come to learn that small problems can be solved in 30 minutes; real life drama happens in 60 minutes and major life crises are resolved in 90 specials or mini-series. Videogames and music videos now accelerate this frenzy. When our children get out of hand, we try to 'scare them straight' or 'get tough' with our love. In family life

classes in our schools, variations on the game of monopoly have been introduced because the actual range of experience available to our children is not sufficient to get the message across to them that if you get pregnant and marry too young, you will not pass go and you will not collect. Alternatively, girls have been asked to carry around an uncooked egg for two days so that they can return it undamaged at the end of the exercise having acquired, it is hoped, a sense of the unrelenting responsibilities of being a parent. The need to which such examples respond is real enough. Yet, I would suggest to you that the artificiality of the exercises we put our children through is an indictment of our culture and of the limited range of experience that is available to them.

Too often, with the best of intentions, we have unintentionally designed and implemented programs and policies that deny that the individuals whom we wish to serve and to work with are in relationships with others and that they carry responsibilities to the members of their families, neighbourhoods and communities. Take as an example the health care professions. Until very recently, family members have been perceived as a hindrance to the healing process. That is, after all, why visiting hours are limited, why children were traditionally excluded from hospitals and why the processes of birth and death were hidden. Things are beginning to change slowly as families are being reappreciated as the primary health care providers; we see this in the hospice movement, in the participation of men in labour and delivery and in the introduction of parental beds into children's wards.

Similarily, we are beginning to remember that family is a stronger agent in the educational process than the schools, a stronger teacher of values than the church and a stronger influence on the socialization process of children than the media.

By way of conclusion and, I hope, by way of introduction to your workshop discussions, I would ask you to consider whether or not, in the past, our conceptions of leisure and recreation were excessively individualized. Have we unintentionally drawn people away from one another or have we provided them with excuses to escape from their relationships by designing programs for seniors, exercise programs for women, pottery classes for girls aged 8 to 12 and so on and so forth? And, are there today examples analogous to recent developments in the health care professions of ways in which our recreation and leisure programs are beginning to draw people together and to build relationships between the young and the old, between men and women, between the able and the disabled? I suggest that it is not possible to re-create ourselves as individuals. Rather, our vitality and our potential to become full human beings reside in the times we spend together. I appreciate sincerely this opportunity to have been with you.